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ABSTRACT

This study examines the reliability of article coverage in the American Theological Library Association's (ATLA) Religion Database CD-ROM of two emerging theological fields: lesbian theology and womanist theology. Indexing predictability and consistency of coverage is important for the access of needed documents. There is concern that women's ideas, especially those of women who belong to marginalized groups, have been excluded in traditional indexing sources. This study attempts to evaluate the indexing reliability of the ATLA database by examining articles whose subject is lesbianism or womanist theology in feminist periodicals indexed by the database covering a nine year period (1986-1994) in randomly selected years. Reliability of issue coverage, the percentage of total article indexing and the indexing of found lesbian and womanist articles in a given periodical in the years examined are discussed. The overall indexing of all feminist theological journals in the ATLA Religion Database is low (29.1% indexed). As found in previous studies, lesbian material was the least indexed category of materials found in this study. An appendix includes the data collection sheet. (Contains 26 references.) (Author/SWC)

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Reliability of Coverage of Periodical Indexing of Lesbian Theological and Womanist Theological Articles in the ATLA Religion Database (1995)

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Library Science

by

Suzanne A. Smailes

May, 1996

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the reliability of article coverage in the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM** database of two emerging theological fields: lesbian theology and womanist theology. Indexing predictability and consistency of coverage is important for the access of needed documents. There is concern that women's ideas, especially those of women who belong to marginalized groups, have been excluded in traditional indexing sources. This study will attempt to evaluate the indexing reliability of the **ATLA** database by examining articles whose subject is lesbian or womanist theology in feminist periodicals indexed by the database covering a nine year period (1986-1994) in randomly selected years. Reliability of issue coverage, the percentage of total article indexing and the indexing of found lesbian and womanist articles in a given periodical in the years examined will be discussed.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the reliability of article coverage in the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM** database of two emerging theological fields: lesbian theology and womanist theology. Indexing predictability and consistency of coverage is important for the access of needed documents. There is concern that women's ideas, especially those of women who belong to marginalized groups, have been excluded in traditional indexing sources. This study will attempt to evaluate the indexing reliability of the **ATLA** database by examining articles whose subject is lesbian or womanist theology in feminist periodicals indexed by the database covering a nine year period (1986-1994) in randomly selected years. Reliability of issue coverage, the percentage of total article indexing and the indexing of found lesbian and womanist articles in a given periodical in the years examined will be discussed.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

The documentation of literature is an important aspect of librarianship. Documentation is defined as "the science of collecting, storing and organizing recorded information or documents for optimum access and specificity".[1] Documentation includes indexing, abstracting, procurement, reproduction and translation of documents.

Documentation serves the needs of the user in a variety of ways. Gupta identifies three: first, it helps the user to have up-to-date information on a given subject. Secondly, it helps the user to save her or his resources -- financial, manual and material-- from duplication of research. Lastly, it helps the user to be guided properly in organizing her or his ideas in a useful manner.[2] In addition, the need to harness and control the vast amount of information that is being produced has made the techniques of documentation very essential.

However, the need to harness and control information has created a problem in the censorship of materials. Censorship is usually thought of in terms of the absence or removal of the item to be censored, or the presence of an item in a collection shielded from public access.[3] In indexing, censorship occurs

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[1]Gupta, Sushma. "Documentation of Protestant Theological Literature." **Afer**, 27:5 (October, 1985), p. 295.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Inter, Sheila S. "Censorship in Indexing." **The Indexer**, 14:2 (October, 1984), p.105.

when indexes effectively bury materials. The item may be on a database index, but not easily accessible to the user by an author, title, or keyword search. This is not a deliberate or a planned result of either the structure of an index or the process of indexing. Indexes are, by their very nature, tools of discovery.[4] Yet censorship occurs when indexers decide to exclude an item from an index because the policy of that index is to exclude them; or when an indexer indexes the item in such a way that they are shielded from discovery.[5]

For periodicals or materials in particular subject areas, indexes are essential to systematic research, because few individuals can obtain the information needed by reading all the issues of all the periodicals indexed. Because the function of an index is to bring out ideas and materials from a mass of information, searchers rely on the index and assume that an item not found there, for whatever reason, is missing from the indexed work.[6]

Indexing is also important from a selections or acquisitions perspective. Publishers are often reluctant to index periodicals to which libraries do not subscribe, while libraries are

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 106.

reluctant to subscribe to unindexed periodicals.[7]

Therefore, the inclusion of items to be indexed and the choice of terms assigned once items are indexed are extremely important in the retrieval and eventual use by the user. To avoid inadvertent censorship, it is important that the materials are indexed in such a way for the material to be accessible to the user.

Concern about language and the exclusion of women's ideas in many traditional sources has increased.[8] Gerhard, Jacobson and Williamson examined the indexing adequacy of Women's Studies periodicals and articles of interest to Women's Studies scholars. They found the lack of indexes and abstracts that include Women's Studies periodicals and articles to be a problem. In addition, the indexing of the women's journals found in most indexes and abstracts was unpredictable. For example, five out of twelve articles in the Fall, 1988 journal of **Anima** were indexed, while no articles from the Spring, 1988 issue of the same journal were indexed.[9] Therefore, the issue is not only the need for indexing of more journals that publish articles of interest to

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[7]Gough, Cal and Greenblatt, Ellen. "Services to Gay and Lesbian Patrons: Examining the Myths." **Library Journal**, 117:1 (January, 1992), p. 62.

[8]Pritchard, Sarah M. "Developing Criteria for Database Evaluation: the Example of Women's Studies". **Evaluation of Reference Services**, ed. Bill Katz and Ruth Farley. New York : Haworth Press, 1984, p. 254.

[9]Gerhard, Kristin H., Jacobson, Trudi E. and Williamson, Susan G. "Indexing Adequacy and Interdisciplinary Journals: the Case for Women's Studies." **College and Research Libraries**, 54:2 (March, 1993), p. 132.

Women's Studies scholars, but that the articles found in the journals need to be indexed more consistently.

Gerhard et al. suggest a similar pattern of indexing of journals might be found in emerging, young or interdisciplinary fields. When a journal is not reliably indexed, researchers using the index may believe they have retrieved all relevant information, when in fact they have not.[10]

This paper evaluates the American Theological Library Association's (ATLA) database in the area of two traditionally marginalized groups in theology: lesbians and African-American women. (For a description of the database, see below.) The research questions addressed are: What is the indexing depth (that is, the number of articles indexed per each journal) of feminist theological journals in the **ATLA Religion Database**? Is the depth of coverage the same for each year examined? What is the percentage of article coverage of total articles per issue? What is the percentage of article coverage of articles with lesbian and/or womanist theological content found in the journals examined?

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE INDEXES

The first main indexer of exclusively religious and theological literature was the **Index to Religious Periodical Literature**, which appeared in 1949. Several other indexes that include religious and theological literature are **Religious and**

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[10]Ibid., p. 132.

Theological Abstracts, **Humanities Index**, **Arts and Humanities Citation Index**, **Religion Index One**, **Religion Index Two**, **Index to Book Reviews in Religion**, **Research In Ministry**, and **Methodist Reviews Index**.

Many of these indexes are available separately on CD-ROM. However, in early 1993 the American Theological Library Association created a new database called **ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM**, which contains the five main indexes used in theological research. They are: **Religion Index One: Periodicals, 1949-1994; Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works, 1960-1993; Index to Book Reviews in Religion, 1975-1994; Research in Ministry, 1981-1994;** and **Methodist Reviews Index (1818-1985)**. All of these indexes are indexed by the American Theological Library Association.

Religion Index One: Periodicals, 1949-1994 annually indexes more than 12,000 articles from more than five hundred international journals in religion and related fields. **Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works, 1960-1993** annually indexes four hundred fifty international publications containing essays in religion and related fields. **Index to Book Reviews in Religion, 1975-1994** annually indexes more than 14,500 book reviews from more than four hundred fifty international journals in religion and related fields. **Research in Ministry, 1981-1994** annually indexes current projects, reports, and theses in ministry studies submitted by D.Min. programs accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. **Methodist**

Reviews Index (1818-1985) indexes 29,500 articles and book reviews from five periodicals related to Methodism.[11]

As a result of the relatively new access to the indexes on the CD-ROM, it is important that information is accessible through this database, as it may be the only database available to or consulted by the patron.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies that document the inadequate indexing of women's studies periodicals in print and online services. Gerhard et al. in their study which examined the indexing adequacy and interdisciplinary journals in Women's Studies indexes present a four point criteria for indexing adequacy. To be defined as adequate, the following criteria were applied: 1) important women's studies titles should be indexed in at least one of the three interdisciplinary women's studies indexes (i.e., **Women's Studies Index**, **Women Studies Abstracts**, and **Studies on Women Abstracts**); 2) titles belonging to a specific field or discipline should be indexed in at least one key index for that discipline; 3) interdisciplinary women's studies journals respected for scholarly content should be indexed in a broad interdisciplinary index such as **Social Sciences Index** or **Humanities Index**; and 4) periodicals or magazines not directed to an academic audience should be indexed

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[11]**ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM : User's Guide** (Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1994), pp. i-ii.

when appropriate in a general index such as **Reader's Guide** or **Magazine Index**.[12] The results of their study show that many indexes and abstracts are ignoring relevant journals or are only picking up a small percentage of articles within a given journal.

In their study Gerhard et al. examined eighty-six journals, twenty-two of which are women's studies journals in the humanities (including journals of religion). Of these twenty-two, eight journals were determined to be adequately indexed, one journal was not indexed at all, and the other thirteen were indexed, but not fully or not in all the pertinent indexes. In addition, Gerhard et al. note that "lesbian journals seem to have been given particularly short shrift in the indexes the authors searched; they were the least-indexed category, despite the growth of lesbian studies in recent years."[13] Gerhard, Jacobson and Williamson conjecture that user satisfaction would be increased by increasing the breadth (that is, the number of journals indexed) and depth (number of articles indexed) of coverage of relevant journals.[14]

Mesplay and Koch in their study evaluating the indexing services for women's studies periodicals found that the indexing of journal issues and the indexing of articles varied widely among the indexing services examined. For example, they found that the **Studies on Women Abstracts** indexed 24.7% of the articles

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[12]Gerhard et al., p. 129.

[13]Ibid., p. 132.

[14]Ibid., p. 127.

in the periodicals it covered, while the **Women's Studies Abstracts** indexed 93.2% of the articles in the periodicals it covered.[15] Overall, in searching eight key indexes for women's studies periodicals, they found that slightly more than half of possible article citations were actually indexed (53.2%).[16]

Krikos in her 1994 study compares the three main Women's Studies indexes (**Women Studies Abstracts**, **Studies on Women Abstracts**, and **Women's Studies Abstracts**) by several criteria, including scope and depth of indexing. She discusses the omission of specific lesbian periodicals in **Women Studies Abstracts** and in **Studies on Women Abstracts**, but notes their inclusion of periodicals that do offer lesbian perspectives.[17] By contrast, **Women's Studies Index** does index several specifically lesbian periodicals.

Krikos also notes that indexing depth varied with each index. She describes "indexing depth" as "how thorough the indexing is for main articles, reviews, creative works...and the like as well as the total number of records in the [indexing] service."[18] She compared the total number of all authored articles, reviews and creative works in a given year to the

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[15]Mesplay, Deborah and Loretta Koch. "An Evaluation of Indexing Services for Women's Studies Periodical Literature". **RQ**, 32:3 (Spring, 1993), p. 408.

[16]Ibid., p. 409.

[17]Krikos, Linda A. "Women's Studies Periodical Indexes: an In-Depth Comparison." **Serials Review** 20:2 (1994), p. 66.

[18]Ibid.

number of articles, reviews and creative works actually indexed in each of three indexes. Her results show selective indexing of journal issues in specific journal titles. In addition, she found selective indexing of articles for different periodicals. (For example, the **Women's Studies Index** cited 100% of all total articles found in the journal **Feminist Studies**, but only 69% of all articles found in the journal **Signs**.)[19]

These studies show that the appearance of a journal title in a list of "journals indexed" by an indexing service does not ensure the user of the index that there is comprehensive indexing of the listed journal itself for each journal issue or indexing of articles found in the journal.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objective of this study is to measure the reliability of coverage of articles of two emerging theologies, womanist and lesbian, in the **ATLA Religion Database**. To measure the reliability of coverage, the consistency of indexing feminist theological journals is examined. Reliability has been measured by the journal indexing coverage of the **ATLA** database for each journal as well as what the percentage of article coverage of total articles per issue is for each journal. Reliability of coverage of lesbian and womanist articles is then evaluated. By examining core feminist theology periodicals indexed in the **ATLA Religion Database** for the randomly selected years within a nine

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[19]Ibid., p. 70.

year period, I assess the issue and article coverage for the periodicals, and womanist and lesbian articles in particular.

METHODOLOGY

An article is defined as womanist or lesbian if its authorship is by an accepted authority in womanist or lesbian theology. This was determined by using two bibliographies compiled by authorities in each field. For womanist theology, the bibliography entitled "The Womanist Legacy in the Theological Learned Societies" was used. For lesbian theology, the bibliography in spiritual issues compiled by the Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the American Library Association was used. An article is also defined as womanist or lesbian if the subject matter of the article discusses theology from these perspectives, or if the article uses the terms "womanist", "lesbian", "womanist theology" or "lesbian theology", or words of equivalent meaning (i.e., "gay women", "female homosexuals", etc.).

I first identify the feminist theological periodicals indexed in the **ATLA** database. Feminist theological periodicals are examined because womanist and lesbian theological articles would be most likely found in these periodicals. This list is generated from the **Religion Indexes: Thesaurus, 1994** listing of the total periodicals indexed in the **ATLA** database. There are currently five periodicals indexed in the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM** that describe themselves as feminist journals: **Anima**, **Daughters of Sarah**, **Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion**,

Journal of Women and Religion, and **Women's Review of Books**.

As discussed in the literature review, the inconsistency found in journal issue coverage by year in other indexes requires the step of examining more than one year of a journal's publication in order to determine if the **ATLA** database exhibits the same inconsistency. In addition, there are several types of items found in the journals examined. These items were determined to be an article, review, poetry or fiction. The recording of the different types is needed, as some of the journals have a majority of items other than articles. For example, the **Women's Review of Books** contains more reviews than articles.

To determine reliability, issue coverage is determined for each feminist theological journal in randomly selected years in the time frame 1986-1994. Since the dates of coverage of all five indexes are inclusive of the years 1981-, and since "womanist theology" was first coined in 1985, I examine random years in the time frame of 1986-1994. Six randomly selected years were chosen to represent each journal.

I then record the title, author and bibliographic citation for each item found in the same selected feminist theological periodicals. The type of item is then characterized as article, fiction, poetry or review. Each issue is then examined for lesbian, womanist, or both lesbian and womanist content and recorded.

I then search the **ATLA** database by title, author, or

bibliographic citation to determine if the items are found in the database. If the item is not found by any of these three approaches, it is was marked as "not found". Each item not found is examined against the ATLA's indexing policy to determine if it was not indexed for policy reasons (i.e., under 500 words, etc.)

Conclusions are then drawn about the reliability of issue coverage of indexed feminist theological periodicals, the percentage of total item coverage, and the coverage of items with womanist or lesbian theological content in the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM.**

ITEM SEARCHING

Several issues arose during the searching process. The first concerns author searching. The database has not always used the same name or form of name for each individual author; the indexers originally used in their citation the name that was signed to the article. This policy was later changed, and current indexing policy uses the Library of Congress name-authority file, or other accepted authorities such as the **New Catholic Encyclopedia**, **Encyclopedia Judaica,** etc.[20] A single author therefore can have multiple name entries in the database. For example, searching **Weems, Renita J** would not retrieve the record that has **Weems, Renita** as its signed author, even though **Weems, Renita J** is the Library of Congress's name authority.

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[20]**Religion Indexes: Thesaurus**, 6th edition. Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1994, preface.

On the other hand, the article found on pages 11-13 in the January-February, 1991 issue of **Daughters of Sarah** entitled "Fear of Aging : the Beginning of Wisdom" is signed "**Kristin Johnson Ingram**". It is found in the database under "**Ingram, Kristen Johnson**", which is the Library of Congress's name-authority for this author. Therefore, the searcher has no consistent method for searching by the author field.

In my searching authors, I used the author's name as it appeared on the article, since that is the method the database stated it used before implementing its name-authority for indexing authors (which the index has been introduced only recently.) Several records were not retrieved by author searches, for the reasons discussed above. However, if they were then found by a title or bibliographic citation search, it was counted as "found".

The second issue that arose concerns searching poetry. Many times the first poem of a series was found in a title search, but the poems with independent titles following the initial poem were not. For example, Rachel Berghas's six poems found in the Spring 1988 issue of **Anima** is cited in the database as: **Lag B'Omer festivities [and other poems]**. The five remaining poems were then listed in a contents note and could not be found with a title search. However, the five poems were listed as "found", since an author search does bring up this record, and the title of the remaining poems can be found in the record.

A third issue concerns the combining of a single issue into

one citation, or several items in an issue under one citation. For example, several **Daughters of Sarah** issues have the title on the cover of the issue as the title listed in the database, with the editor of the issue listed as the author:

Author: Finger, Reta Halteman, ed.
Title: Earthkeeping: a Christian Ecofeminist Vision.
Journal: **Daughters of Sarah** 16:1-30 My-Je 1990

The individual titles and authors are then listed under a contents note, and are not retrievable by an author or title search. The journal citation search (searchable only by journal title and year) will bring up the title and author listed above; however, someone searching for the individual article by Barbara G. Schmitz entitled "Eucharist and Ecology" , which appears in this issue of **Daughters of Sarah** would not find the article by an author, title or journal citation search, but only through a keyword search (as content notes are searchable only by keyword.)

In other cases, an issue would have some items indexed only under the cover title, while other items found in the same issue were indexed individually. Items that did not have a separate entry, but were listed a contents note only were therefore marked as "not found". The indexing was very unpredictable in this matter. Some issues had their total contents combined into one citation, while others had individual items also indexed. A user would need to use a keyword search for each item they were searching to ensure retrieval of a record, whether the search was for a title or an author. That seems to defeat the purpose of a separate author or title searching capability. Indeed, after

finding an author's name listed in other citations, the user would most likely assume there were no further articles by the author to be found in the database.

While searching the bibliographic citation, it is important to note that reviews are indexed to the year in which the item being reviewed was published, not the year in which the review appeared. In addition, the author of the item being reviewed is listed as the "author", and the reviewer is in a "reviewer" note field, which is searchable only by a "keyword" search. For example:

Year: 1991 Type: Review

Author: Mitchell, Rosemary Vatalano, and Anderson, Gail
Title: Birthings and Blessings : Liberating Worship Services for the Inclusive Church
Journal: **Daughters of Sarah** 19:49 Spr 1993
Reviewer: Goulart, Frances Sheridan

If the person searching the database typed in the bibliographic citation search "year: 1993", the record would not be retrieved; instead, "year: 1991" must be entered, or the year omitted entirely.

The above discussion reflect's Inter's concern of a database "effectively burying the material", creating unintentional censorship. While some of the items are retrievable by keyword, and therefore accessible, the material is not retrieved if searched by author, title, or bibliographic citation, and therefore may be assumed by the searcher not to be in the database.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in the following tables show the search results. The periodical with the highest rate of indexed items is **Anima**, with 84.4% indexed. The periodical with the lowest indexed rate is **Women's Review of Books**, with 5.6% indexed (see Table 1A).

For items with womanist content or authorship, the **Journal of Women and Religion** has a 100% indexed rate, while **Women's Review of Books** has the lowest indexed rate at 21.4% (see Table 1B).

Tables 1A-1D : Items by Journal Title

Table 1A: All Items

Journal Title	Total Possible **All Items**	Indexed	% Indexed
Anima	109	92	84.4
Daughters of Sarah	522	332	63.6
Feminist Studies in Religion	111	83	74.8
Journal of Women and Religion	72	51	70.8
Women's Review of Books	1365	77	5.6
Total: All journals	2179	635	29.1
Total: All Journals **Excluding** WRB	**814**	**558**	**68.6**

For items with lesbian content or authorship, the **Journal of Women and Religion** again had a 100% indexed rate, while **Anima** had 0.0% indexed, and **Women's Review of Books** only a 2.4% indexed rate (see Table 1C). (Note that the **Women's Review of Books** had a total of 124 items with lesbian content or authorship, while only one such item was present in **Anima**. Therefore, although the percent indexed is slightly higher, many more items are missed by the indexing practices of **Women's Review of Books** than the indexing practices of **Anima**.)

Table 1B. Womanist Content or Authorship

Journal Title	Total Possible **Womanist**	Indexed	% Indexed
Anima	-	-	-
Daughters of Sarah	6	5	83.3
Feminist Studies in Religion	10	8	80.0
Journal of Women and Religion	3	3	100
Women's Review of Books	14	3	21.4
Total: All Journals	33	19	57.6
Total: All Journals **Excluding** WRB	**19**	**16**	**84.2**

For items with both womanist and lesbian content or authorship, **Feminist Studies in Religion** had an 81.8% indexed rate, while the **Women's Review of Books** had a 0.0% indexed rate (see Table 1D). (The other three periodicals contained no items that were both womanist and lesbian in content or authorship.) The indexed rate for all items with both womanist or lesbian content or authorship is 60.0%.

Table 1C: Lesbian Content or Authorship

Journal Title	Total Possible **Lesbian**	Indexed	% Indexed
Anima	1	0	0.00
Daughters of Sarah	43	20	46.5
Feminist Studies in Religion	16	11	68.8
Journal of Women and Religion	5	5	100
Women's Review of Books	124	3	2.4
Total: All Journals	188	38	20.2
Total: All Journals **Excluding** WRB	**65**	**36**	**55.4**

The data in Table 1A show a very low indexing rate for the **Women's Review of Books** (5.6%) compared to the other periodicals.

One reason for this may be that the **Women's Review of Books** was initially indexed (in print) in the **Religion Index One : Periodicals** (**RIO**) in its "book review index" section. In 1986, the "book review index" in **RIO** was dropped and a new index was created, the **Index to Book Reviews in Religion** (**IBRR**). This expanded the amount of review items indexed.

The earlier years of the **IBRR** appear to index reviews for works that the indexer thought were of interest to the theological community. This is a subjective decision for the indexer; what is considered of interest may change with the indexer or with feedback from the theological community over time. For example, the December 1986 issue of **Women's Review of Books**, the review:

Benedict, Helen. **Recovery: How to Survive Sexual Assault**

was not indexed. However, two years later, a review on the same topic was indexed in the October 1988 issue:

Bass, Ellen and Davis, Laura. **The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse**.

Therefore, given the unpredictability of **Women Review of Books** indexing practice, I decided to analyze the data with and without the data gathered from the **Women's Review of Books**.

When the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded, the data in Table 1A show that the periodical with the highest indexed rate is still **Anima**, with 84.4% indexed. The periodical with the lowest indexed rate is **Daughters of Sarah**, with 63.6% indexed.

Table 1D: Both Womanist and Lesbian Content or Authorship

Journal Title	Total Possible **Both**	Indexed	% Indexed
Anima	-	-	-
Daughters of Sarah	-	-	-
Feminist Studies in Religion	11	9	81.8
Journal of Women and Religion	-	-	-
Women's Review of Books	4	0	0.0
Total: All Journals	15	9	60.0
Total: All Journals **Excluding** WRB	**11**	**9**	**81.8**

For items with womanist content or authorship when the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded, the periodical with the lowest indexed rate is **Feminist Studies in Religion**, with 80.0%. This is still a relatively high percentage. **The Journal of Women and Religion** remains as the periodical with the highest indexed rate (100%)(see Table 1B).

For items with lesbian content or authorship, the highest and lowest indexed rates and their journals remain the same when the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded (see Table 1C).

With the exclusion of the **Women's Review of Books**, **Feminist Studies in Religion** is the only journal with items with both womanist and lesbian content or authorship (see Table 1D).

Anima, the journal that has the highest rate of indexed items with and without the data from the **Women's Review of Books** (see Table 1A) is produced by Conocheague Associates on the campus of Wilson College. Wilson College is a private, independent non-profit women's college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). In this study, **Anima** has an average of 21.8 items to be indexed per year. Note that there are no womanist or both lesbian and womanist items to be indexed; the one lesbian item that appears in **Anima** is not indexed.

Women's Review of Books, the journal with the lowest rate of indexed items (see Table 1A) is produced by the Women's Review, Inc., and is a project of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. Wellesley College is a private, independent non-profit women's college not affiliated with a religious denomination. In this study, **Women's Review of Books** has an average of 273 items to be indexed per year. **Women's Review of Books** has potentially the most womanist or lesbian items to be indexed of the five journals examined; **Feminist Studies in Religion** has potentially the most items to be indexed that are both lesbian and womanist.

A possible reason the indexing rate is so low for the Women's Review of Books is that it's primary focus is the wider scholarly community, and not specifically the religious

community. The mission statement for **Religion Index One: Periodicals** and **Religion Index Two: Multi Author Works** states that the purpose of the two indexes is:

> to index those articles in the field of religion--particularly religion and religious scholarship in the West--which are germane to research in and serve to document that field. The intended audience includes scholars, teachers, students who are engaged in the study of religion and related fields; clergy; other religious leaders and the general reader in religion.[21]

With the exclusion of the data from **Women's Review of Books**, **Daughters of Sarah** has the lowest rate of items indexed. **Daughters of Sarah** is not associated with a college, but is a not-for profit corporation. The editors state **Daughters Sarah** seeks:

> to provide a forum for varying viewpoints within Christian feminism. Daughters of Sarah is a ministry which publishes a prophetic and reflective magazine in order to educate and sustain Christian people to change and transform the church and society on issues of mutuality, justice and equality.[22]

Perhaps a reason why this journal has the lowest indexed rate is because the journal defines itself as a ministry, and not as a journal for the study of religion. However, it does "document the field", especially the field of Christian feminism. Another possible reason that it has the lowest indexed rate is because it has an average of 104.4 possible items to be indexed

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Treesh, Erica, ed. **Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works** (Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1992), p. [ii].

Daughters of Sarah, 22:1 (Winter, 1996), p. 1.

per year. This number of possible items to be indexed is greatly higher than **Feminist Studies in Religion** (with an average of 22.2 potential items to be indexed per year in this study), the **Journal of Women and Religion** (with an average of 14.4 potential items to be indexed per year in this study), or **Anima** (with an average of 21.8 potential items to be indexed per year in this study). Daughters of Sarah in this study has approximately five times the number of potential items to be indexed each year compared to the other periodicals, and therefore has a greater potential for items to be missed in indexing.

The data in Tables 2A-2D show the total items broken down by the item form. The total indexed for all items is 635 (29.1%)(see Table 2A). The data in Tables 2A-2D also show the total items indexed or not indexed according to the item's format excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books**. The total number of items indexed excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is 558 (68.6%)(see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2A show the highest indexing rate for articles, with 57.2% indexed. Reviews have the lowest rate of indexed items, with 16.9%. This compares to Mesplay and Koch's study, which found 53.2% of all possible article citations were indexed.[23]

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[21]Mesplay and Koch, p. 409.

TABLES 2A-2D: Total by Form

Table 2A: All Items

	total possible	indexed	% indexed	total possible excluding WRB	indexed excluding WRB	% indexed excluding WRB
article	551	315	57.2	446	315	70.6
poetry	214	77	36.0	123	77	62.6
review	1388	234	16.9	219	157	71.7
fiction	26	9	36.6	26	9	34.6
total: all form	2179	635	29.1	814	558	68.6

Table 2B: Womanist Content or Authorship

womanist	total possible	indexed	% indexed	total possible excluding WRB	indexed excluding WRB	% indexed excluding WRB
article	18	12	66.7	14	12	85.7
poetry	-	-	-	-	-	-
review	15	7	46.7	5	4	80.0
fiction	-	-	-	-	-	-
total: all form	33	19	57.6	19	16	84.2

Table 2C: Lesbian Content or Authorship

lesbian	total possible	indexed	% indexed	total possible excluding WRB	indexed excluding WRB	% indexed excluding WRB
article	64	23	35.9	47	23	48.9
poetry	5	2	25.0	3	2	66.7
review	119	14	11.8	14	11	78.6
fiction	2	0	0.00	1	0	0.0
total: all form	189	39	20.2	65	36	55.4

Table 2D: Both Womanist and Lesbian Content or Authorship

both	total possible	indexed	% indexed	total possible excluding WRB	indexed excluding WRB	% indexed excluding WRB
article	13	9	69.2	11	9	81.8
poetry	-	-	-	-	-	-
review	2	0	0.00	-	-	-
fiction	-	-	-	-	-	-
total: all form	15	9	60.0	11	9	81.8

The percentage of reviews indexed is much higher when **Women's Review of Books** is eliminated from consideration. Without **Women's Review of Books**, reviews have the highest indexed rate with 71.7%, while indexed articles are second with a rate of 70.6%. The lowest indexing rate is for fiction, with only 34.6% indexed (see Table 2A). A possible reason for this result is the indexer(s) focused on indexing items that would allow for the greatest research potential (reviews and articles) for the broadest audience. Perhaps the average user of the database is

searching for specific information (such as statistical information on battering) or reviews of a book that addresses a specific issue (such as pastoral care to battered women); the poem or short story written by the battered woman may not seem as "important" to scholars.

Comparing the womanist and lesbian indexed items shown in Table 2B and Table 2C a number of observations can be made. The data in Table 2B show items by form with womanist content or authorship. The form with the highest percentage of indexed items is articles (66.7%), while the lowest percentage indexed form is reviews (46.7%). Note that womanist poetry and fiction did not appear in any of the journals. Overall, 57.6 of all forms with womanist content or authorship were indexed, 28.5% higher than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2B also show items by form with womanist content or authorship without data from the **Women's Review of Books**. The form with the highest percentage of indexed items excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is articles, with 85.7% indexed. The form with the lowest percentage indexed is reviews, with 80.0% indexed. Overall, 84.2% of all forms with womanist content or authorship were indexed, 15.6% higher than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2C show items with lesbian content or authorship broken down by form. The form with the highest percentage indexed is again articles (35.9%), and fiction again

with the lowest indexed rate (0.0%). Overall, 20.2% of all forms with lesbian content or authorship were indexed, 8.9% lower than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2C also show items with lesbian content or authorship by form without the **Women's Review of Books** data. Reviews have the highest percentage of indexed items(78.6%), while fiction remains the form with the lowest percentage indexed (0.0%). Overall, 55.4% of all forms with lesbian content or authorship were indexed, 13.2% lower than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2D show items by form with both womanist and lesbian content or authorship. The form with the highest percentage of indexed items is articles, with 69.2% indexed. The form with the lowest percentage indexed is reviews, with 0.0% indexed. Again, there was no womanist and lesbian poetry or fiction appearing in any of the journals. Overall, 60.0% of all forms with both lesbian and womanist content were indexed, 30.9% higher than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Table 2D also show items by form with both womanist and lesbian content or authorship excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books**. The only form appearing in the journals is articles, with 81.8% indexed. Overall, 81.8% of all forms with both lesbian and womanist authorship or content were indexed, 13.2% higher than the indexing rate of all items examined (see Table 2A).

The data in Tables 3A-3E show the form of each item indexed for each year. This table includes data from the **Women's Review of Books**.

The data in Table 3A show 1993 as the year with the highest percentage of indexed articles, with 100% indexed. The year with the lowest indexed rate is 1994, with only 19.1% indexed. Six of the nine years have more than 50% of all possible articles indexed.

TABLES 3A-3E: Items Indexed by Form by Year

Table 3A: ARTICLE

year	total possible	indexed	% indexed
1986	51	15	29.4
1987	77	45	58.4
1988	83	33	39.8
1989	40	21	52.5
1990	54	36	66.7
1991	72	56	77.8
1992	83	73	88.0
1993	23	23	100.0
1994	68	13	19.1

Table 3B: POETRY

year	total possible	indexed	% indexed
1986	21	0	0.0
1987	39	16	41.0
1988	30	7	23.3
1989	35	13	37.1
1990	8	0	0.0
1991	31	12	38.7
1992	25	22	88.0
1993	7	7	100.0
1994	18	0	0.0

Table 3C: REVIEW

year	total possible	indexed	% indexed
1986	221	3	1.4
1987	284	30	10.6
1988	275	49	17.8
1989	249	28	11.2
1990	48	32	66.7
1991	37	36	97.3
1992	26	21	80.8
1993	1	0	0.0
1994	247	35	14.2

Table 3D: FICTION

year	total possible	indexed	% indexed
1986	-	-	-
1987	3	3	100.0
1988	5	1	20.0
1989	-	-	-
1990	7	1	14.3
1991	6	0	0.0
1992	5	4	80.0
1993	-	-	-
1994	-	-	-

Table 3E: ALL FORMS

year	total possible	indexed	% indexed
1986	293	18	6.1
1987	403	94	23.3
1988	393	90	22.9
1989	324	62	19.1
1990	117	69	59.0
1991	146	104	71.2
1992	139	120	86.3
1993	31	30	96.8
1994	333	48	14.4

The data in Table 3B show 1993 as the year with the highest indexing rate of indexed poetry items, with 100% indexed. 1986, 1990, and 1994 all had 0.0% poetry items indexed. Seven of the

nine years have less than 50.0% of all possible poetry items indexed.

The data in Table 3C show 1991 as the year with the highest indexing rate of indexed review items, with 97.3% indexed. The year with the lowest indexing of review items is 1993, with 0.0% indexed. Six of the nine years have less than 50.0% of all possible review items indexed.

The data in Table 3D show 1987 as the year with the highest indexing rate of indexed fiction items, with 100.0% indexed. The year with the lowest indexing of fiction items is 1993, with 0.0% indexed. Five of the nine years have fiction items to be indexed; three of those five years have less than 50.0% of all possible fiction items indexed.

The data in Table 3E show 1993 as the year with the highest indexing rate of indexed of all the forms combined, with 96.8% indexed. The year with the lowest indexing of all forms combined is 1986, with 6.1% indexed. Five of the nine years have less than 50.0% of all possible items indexed.

The data in Tables 3A-3E show that 1993 is the strongest year indexed, while 1986 is the least indexed year. The data in the table also show that indexing indeed varied by year, and by what type of item is being indexed. For example, 1991 is strong on indexing all possible article and review items (77.8% and 97.3% indexed, respectively), but not as strong with indexing all possible poetry or fiction items (38.7% and 0.0% indexed, respectively.)

When the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded, years for the highest and lowest percentage rate remains the same for poetry, reviews, and for all forms as the percentage rates shown in Tables 3B, 3C, and 3E. The number of possible articles indexed does change for these forms, however. For poetry, seven of the nine years have poetry to be indexed; four of the seven years have more than 50.0% of all possible poetry items indexed. For reviews, six of the nine years have review items to be indexed; five of these six years have more than 50.0% of all possible review items indexed. For all forms, eight of the nine years have more than 50.0% of all possible items indexed.

The data do differ for the forms of articles and fiction. The year with the highest indexing rate for articles (excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books**) is 1993 (100%), and 1986 with the lowest indexing rate (44.1%). Seven of the nine years have more than 50% of all possible articles indexed.

For fiction, 1987 is the year with the highest indexing rate of fiction items (100.0%), and 1991 the year with the lowest indexing rate (0.0%). Five of the nine years have fiction items to be indexed; three of those five years have less than 50.0% of all possible fiction items indexed.

As with Tables 3A-3E, indexing again varied by year, and by what type of item is being indexed when the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded. (For example, 1988 is stronger on indexing all possible poetry and review items (50.0% and 71.7% indexed, respectively), but not as strong with indexing all

possible article or fiction items (45.8% and 20.0 indexed, respectively.)

In the preface of each volume of the print form of **Religion Index One**, the editor of the volume reports how many "issues" of the "periodical titles" they are "scheduled to see" and how many are actually examined. For example, the 1993 volume states that ATLA indexed "issues from 425 of the 504 periodical titles we are regularly scheduled to see". The editor also states that "we have made a concentrated effort to 'catch up' with journal titles for one reason or another we had not seen in some time".[24] This "concentrated effort" might be a possible reason it is the year with the highest indexed rate found in this study.

The 1986 preface of the **Religion Index One** states that this is the year the book reviews were moved to the new publication, **Index to Book Reviews in Religion**. This year also had two editors, one leaving after the first part of the year to accept a new position elsewhere. These two incidents might have contributed to this study's finding of 1986 having the lowest indexing rate.

The researcher using the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM** does not have access to the information provided in the print source's preface of the **Religion Index One**, **Religion Index Two**, or the **Index of Book Reviews in Religion**. Without the information given in the preface to the print source, the researcher may assume

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Religion Index One : Periodicals. Evanston, IL: American Theological Library Association, 1993, p. iii.

that each year is indexed equally. For example, the researcher would not know how many issues of the total journals that were scheduled to be examined were actually examined. The strengths or weaknesses of a particular year discussed in the preface would not be known.

CONCLUSION

The overall indexing of all feminist theological journals in the **ATLA Religion Database** is low (29.1% indexed). When the data collected from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded, the percentage of indexed items increases dramatically (68.6%). Because the **Women's Review of Books** had such a low indexing rate compared to the other periodicals examined, I analyzed the data with the data from the **Women's Review of Books** and excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books.** The percentage of total indexed womanist articles also increases when the data from the **Women's Review of Books** is excluded, increasing from 57.6% to 84.2% items indexed. Items that are both womanist and lesbian also increases, from 60.0% to 81.8% items indexed.

These two categories (womanist items, both womanist and lesbian items) have relatively high indexed percentages when compared to the overall total and the total lesbian items indexed. The percentage of lesbian items indexed overall is 20.2%; excluding the data from the **Women's Review of Books**, 54.7% of lesbian items are indexed.

Lesbian material in the **ATLA Religion Database** is the least

indexed category of materials examined in this study. This adds to Gerhard et al.'s finding that lesbian material is the least indexed category found in their study of women's studies indexing practices.[25] Why this is so is beyond the scope of this study; however, this is an area in which future research could be conducted. Future research might include a comparison of the indexing rate for feminist journals found in this study to the indexing rate of five journals that do not define themselves as feminist and are indexed in the **ATLA Religion Database CD-ROM.**

I was somewhat surprised to note how few womanist or lesbian items were found in the journals examined. By expanding the number of journals indexed, the **ATLA Religion Database** could give more access to these types of items. For example, indexing journals such as **Feminist Studies**, **Women and Therapy**, **Connexions**, **Signs**, **Journal of Homosexuality**, **Brown Papers**, and **The Womanist** could greatly increase items with lesbian or womanist theological content.

From both personal experience as a researcher and as a librarian at a theological library, I have observed that materials from emerging subject areas and of marginalized peoples can be difficult to find in theological indexes. Patrons who are searching the ATLA Religion Database and are not able to find citations to articles probably assume there are no articles to be found. Four of the five journals examined in this study list Religion Index One, Religion Index Two, or Index to Book Reviews

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[25]Gerhard et al., p. 132.

in Religion as an indexing source. (Women's Review of Books did not.) It is likely that a researcher will assume that most of the items in each journal issue will be indexed in the database. Because of this, their research may suffer in content. The researcher may suffer a loss of time or money. In addition, these theologies may then lack the visibility that is necessary to create further expansion and expression of their ideas in their communities and in the theological field.

APPENDIX

(Collection Tools)

ARTICLE

FOUND NOT FOUND

Bibliographic citation :

Author : _____

Title : _____

Journal Citation :

Journal_____

Vol. _____

No. _____

Date _____

Pages _____

Type: article fiction poetry review

Article, if found, by

Author_____

Title_____

Jl. Citation _____

Womanist theological content

Lesbian theological content

ARTICLE

(FOUND) NOT FOUND

Bibliographic citation :

Author : Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie and Irena Klepfisz

Title : The Tribe of Dina: a Jewish women's anthology

Journal Citation :

Journal WRB

Vol. 4

No. 3

Date Dec '86

Pages 1, 3-4

Type: article fiction poetry review

Article, if found, by

Author X Klepfisz, Irena

Title

Jl. Citation

Womanist theological content

(Lesbian theological content) Eds. articles in anthology, authors and content

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